INTERVIEW REQUIREMENTS

Purpose: This section explains when a client must have an interview for benefits, when we schedule an interview, and when we can use an alternate type of interview (other than an in-office interview). This section also explains the department's requirements to screen for family violence and what referrals to make for clients who may be affected by family violence.

Effective July 1, 2002

WAC 388-452-0005 Do I have to be interviewed in order to get benefits?

(1) Unless your are applying for medical only or meet certain hardship criteria listed in subsection (8) below, you or your authorized representative must have a face-to-face interview with the department:

(a) At initial certification; and

(b) At least once every twelve months if your assistance unit (AU) is certified for twelve months or less.

(2) You are not required to attend an interview when your application or review is just for medical benefits. If we deny your application for cash or food assistance because you did not appear for an interview, we continue to process your request for medical benefits:

(a) If you are pregnant;

(b) If you are a child under the age of nineteen;

(c) If you have a family with children under the age of nineteen; or

(d) If we have enough information to determine if you are eligible or can get the information by mail.

(3) You will have just one interview even when you apply for or have a review for more than one assistance program.

(4) If you are not interviewed on the same day that we get your application, we schedule an interview appointment for you. We schedule your appointment the day we get your application or the next business day if we get your application on a holiday or a weekend.

(5) We schedule an interview so your AU has at least ten days after the interview to provide needed verification:

(a) Before the end of the thirty-day processing period for applications; or

(b) Before your certification period ends for eligibility reviews.

(6) If you miss your first interview and request another interview within thirty days of the date of your application for benefits, we schedule a second interview for you.

(7) You or another person who can give information about your AU unit must attend the interview. You may bring another person to the interview. You may choose another person to go to the interview for you when:

(a) You cannot come to the local office for us to decide if you are eligible for cash assistance; or

(b) You have an authorized representative as described in WAC 388-460-0005 for food assistance.

(8) We usually have interviews at the local office. You can have a scheduled telephone interview or an interview in your home if attending an interview at the local office causes a hardship for you or your representative. Examples of hardships include:

(a) If your entire assistance unit is elderly or mentally or physically disabled.

(b) If you live in a remote area or have transportation problems;

(c) Severe weather;

(d) If someone in your AU is ill, or you have to stay home to care for an AU member;

(e) Your work or training hours make it difficult to come into the office during regular business hours;

(f) Someone in your AU is affected by family violence such as physical or mental abuse, harassment, or stalking by the abuser; or

(g)	Any other problem which would make it difficult for you to come into the office for an interview.

WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES

When to Schedule an Interview

1. Schedule an interview appointment for the client the day you get the application. If you get the application after business hours, schedule the appointment on the next business day.

   EXAMPLE 1

   If you get the application at 4:55 p.m. on a Friday, schedule the appointment that day.

   EXAMPLE 2

   If you get the application at 5:05 p.m. on a Friday, schedule the appointment on the next business day.

2. Federal law requires we schedule the interview so that the client has a specific date and time to attend the interview.

   a. **Scheduling practices that meet federal requirements:**

      (1) Client applies on 6-25-01 and is scheduled to attend an interview on 6-26-01 between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.;

      (2) Client applies on 6-25-01 and is scheduled to attend an interview on 7-6-01 at 9 a.m.

   b. **Scheduling practices that DO NOT meet federal requirements:**

      (1) Client applies on 6-25-01 and is scheduled to attend an interview any weekday between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.;

      (2) Client applies on 6-25-01 and is scheduled to attend an interview on 7-6-01 at anytime during the day.

3. Schedule the interview so the client has 10 days before the end of their

certification period or 30-day processing period to provide needed information.

EXAMPLE 1

Client applies on 8-1-01. Schedule the interview by 8-20-01 so the client has 10 days to provide needed information before the 30-day processing period ends.

EXAMPLE 2

Client reapplies for food assistance on 6-12-01. Benefits are scheduled to end 6-30-01. Schedule the interview by 6-20-01 so the client has 10 days to provide needed information before the certification period ends.

4. Schedule interviews to accommodate the needs of households with special circumstances, including working households.

When To Interview:

1. For cash and food assistance, interview the client at:

   a. The initial application; and

   b. The eligibility review or recertification, if an interview has not been done within the past twelve months.

EXAMPLE 1

Client initially applied for benefits on March 6th and was certified through August 31st. Client reapplies for benefits before certification period ends. Because the client was interviewed at initial application, there is no need for a face-to-face interview. A desk review can be done instead.

EXAMPLE 2

Same as Example 1, except client reapplies for benefits after certification period ends. Because the client reapplied late, the application must be treated as a new application. A face-to-face interview or a phone interview should be done.

EXAMPLE 3

Client's certification period is ending July 31st. The last time an interview was done was six months ago at the last recertification. There is no need for a new interview. You may do a desk review instead.

EXAMPLE 4

Client's benefits are ending June 30th. The last time the client was interviewed was 11 months ago. Because the client must be interviewed at least once every 12 months, do a face-to-face interview or a phone interview.

2. An interview can be either face-to-face or by phone. Document in the case record what type of interview was done and why.

3. Waive the interview if a client meets any hardship criteria.

4. An interview is not required if the client is applying for medical assistance only or for long-term care.

What To Do During The Interview

1. Review the DSHS 14-113(X), "Your Rights and Responsibilities" with the client and give the client a copy of the form. See **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES** for procedures.

2. Review all completed forms with the client to ensure:

   a. All portions of the form are complete and correct;

   b. Unclear, incomplete, or inconsistent information is resolved with the client; and

   c. All mandatory verification factors are verified. See **VERIFICATION**.

3. See **APPLICATIONS** - Information Needed to Determine Eligibility to determine if all necessary forms are completed.

4. Refer applicants when appropriate to:

- Incapacity Specialist - see **INCAPACITY**

- VOCS/FRED - see **FRAUD**
- Refugee Caseworker - see **REFUGEE ASSISTANCE**
- Teen Parent Caseworker - see **TEEN PARENTS**
- First Steps Caseworker

If a Client Misses an Interview

1. If the client misses a scheduled interview and requests another interview within 30 days of the date of application, schedule a second interview.

2. Do not automatically reschedule a missed interview. Instead, send a letter to the AU that the interview was missed and inform the AU on the letter that it is their responsibility to reschedule a missed interview.

Approval for Alternative Interviews

1. For NSA (Necessary Supplemental Accommodation) clients, waive the in-office interview if the client meets any of the hardship criteria.

2. If you believe an in-office interview is necessary because you suspect the client is committing fraud, waive the interview if the client meets any of the hardship criteria and submit a FRED or VOCS. See **FRAUD.**

3. Telephone or home interviews should be scheduled in advance with the household.

4. Document why the in-office interview was waived in the electronic file.

5. See **Expedited Services—Worker Responsibilities** for what to do when a client is entitled to expedited services and the in-office interview has been waived.

Interpreter Services

Use certified interpreters when the client's requested language is Spanish, Vietnamese, Laotian, Chinese, Cambodian, Russian, or Korean.

1. Provide an interpreter for interviews and telephone services without a significant delay in services. If a client speaks or communicates in a language not listed above, arrange with your LEP coordinator an interpreter for the client's language before the scheduled interview.

2. Friends and family members may not be appropriate interpreters because they could have an interest in the outcome of the interview. The interview could also involve sensitive issues such as family violence.